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THE HOUSE

ART AT HOME.

II.—THE HOUSE WITHIN.

CONSIDERING the large number of houses there are and ever must be of the same size, the varieties of plan are marvellously few. Here in London, a suburban villa contains on the principal floor a front room and a back room, communicating probably by folding doors. A similar arrangement obtains on the floor above, and the rest of the house consists of bedrooms. On the lower story there is often a greenhouse, and we see this feature even in houses of which the back faces the north, so that a greenhouse is a mere contrivance for supplying cold draughts and damp to the back sitting-room.

When a tenant enters on possession of such a house as this his first feeling is, too often, one of simple despair. It seems to him as if nothing can possibly improve it. He cannot pull it down and rebuild it. He must endure as best he can its monotonous rectangularity, and draws little consolation from the knowledge that all his neighbors in the street suffer from precisely the same conditions as himself; they all have their front and back dining-rooms, their mouldy "conservatory" and their front and back drawing-rooms.

How to treat such a case is a problem well worth solving. We shall come presently to that of people who can build their own rooms and make them what they please. But let us put the case of a man who undertakes to inhabit one of the thousands of stucco villas such as abound in the neighborhood of all great towns, and who, while abhorring its tawdry vulgarity, has but small means with which to change it. I have such an example before me now. The tenant began with the "Front Parlor." Here he took away the marble chimney-piece, storing it carefully to replace if necessary at a future date. Instead of it he had a wooden wainscot contrived to make a mantel-board, with a frame in the centre for a picture and niches for certain ivory and other figures which were his household gods. The carving was not very expensive in pine-wood, and when painted like the walls looked very well and neat. The walls were denuded of an old paper, were smoothed and mended where necessary and were painted a pale blue. In the bow window some thick colored glass was arranged, instead of the usual screens; and to admit as much light as possible, the plate glass of the upper sash was not interfered with. It is very common to have plate glass below and to fill the upper panes with tracery and color; but since light comes from above, this gives a peculiar gloom to the chamber within, and unless perhaps in a very warm climate, where sunshine has to be barred out, has a very depressing effect. Next, the back room was treated, as to its walls, like the front one, the folding-doors were

removed, their place being taken by a handsome pair of curtains, to be used in very cold weather. Finally the greenhouse at the back was wholly abolished; and here the chief expenditure took place, for a small room was built out, with windows of a "Queen Anne" pattern at the end, and a little "trap to catch a sunbeam," by means of a light looking westward, was contrived with excellent results. A few odd panes and panels of stained glass gave a pleasant air to this little back room, and a large brass chandelier was suspended from the ceiling. The aspect presented by the three rooms was thus completely changed, with no structural alteration

We have in England an unfortunate idea that eating should be carried on in one room only, and that this dining-room should have a heavy mahogany table, if anything, too large for the room; a large heavy side-board with a piece of looking-glass in the back; two rows of leather-covered chairs with massive backs and—nothing else, except, perhaps, some dark old oil paintings on the walls. This gloomy apartment is sacred to gastronomy. No books, no flowers, except now and then on the dining-table, nothing light or ornamental is admitted. In very large families the existence of some such chamber is perhaps inevitable, but in small families it ought to be abandoned. Let the dining-table be small—it is easy to add to it—let the side-board, if there is one, be something pretty and ornamental in itself. Let the chairs be easy but strong. Let there be a comfortable sofa near the fireplace, and let there be at least one small bookcase and a side table covered with jars for flowers. Such a dining-room acts also as an ordinary sitting-room, and adds to the convenience and size of a small house.

With regard to walls and floors, a few remarks will not be out of place. In towns where dust and soot accumulate, the prime necessity is some contrivance by which the house can be kept clean. Panelled walls are pretty but expensive, and so are "parquetrie" floors. But it is not very costly to smooth a wall with fine plaster and to paint it with common paint. Then we can, as often as we please, wash it all down with soap and water. With the floors, unless the woodwork is very bad indeed, a little staining and a good deal of varnish may safely be used; and nothing looks nicer in a sitting-room than a well-polished floor with plenty of Indian and Persian rugs in those places in which we are mostly likely to sit down. The desire for warmth is not disappointed by the sense of wholesomeness and the beauty of effect. If paper must be pasted on the walls it should be well sized and varnished and be treated occasionally to the best of disinfectants, soap and water. This is especially true of bedrooms and nurseries. Children like pretty pictures on their walls, and in many cases these can be put on a dis-tempered or even on a papered wall and varnished over with admirable effect, and the further quality of indestructibility. There

are many other contrivances of this kind on which I need not dwell, as, for instance, the use of oil-cloth as a "dado" in passages, and of Chinese matting on floors much used and obnoxious to muddy feet.

With regard to color it is needless to say something. Most of us are afraid of color. We know what a charming thing it is when harmoniously arranged, and how excruciating it is when discordant. Further than that we cannot go; we do not know why color is sometimes pleasant and sometimes dreadful; and we dare not try any experiments. It was this cowardice, strange to say, which controlled the so-called "æsthetic movement" of a few years ago. People who knew nothing



THE STAIRCASE OF ASHBURNHAM HOUSE (NOW PART OF WESTMINSTER SCHOOL).

except the substitution of an air and water-tight compartment for the greenhouse. The front room to the south was full of light, and was hung with pictures. Some pictures, but more mirrors, were in the comparatively dark middle room; and the new room at the back ended the view with its pretty windows, its gay colored carpets, its brass work and its painted windows.

In another case, the tenant of one of these villas had space to build a wholly new room at one side, and having been fortunate enough to acquire some old oak paneling, he lined it throughout, and made a very handsome sitting-room, the chief fault of which was that it rendered the rest of the house more ugly by contrast.

of harmony, but who, nevertheless, could shudder at discord, found by chance that what are called tertiary colors are seldom or never discordant. They went in, consequently, for autumn tints, drabs and russets and pale lemon. But these dull colors were not satisfying. One longed for something positive, and, at the risk of being unfashionable, some people repudiated tertiaries, and took to red and blue and yellow again, or, at the least, to purple, orange and green. The whole theory of harmonious color is so simple and so easy to remember that the wonder is so few of us know the rule as to "three of yellow, five of red and eight of blue." Of course in coloring rooms very great modifications must be introduced. I remember a dining-room in a dull street with a cold northern aspect. It was painted red, and the doors and windows were black, with a good deal of gold. The result was a room which, at all

old manor house in Surrey which was almost uninhabitable, it was so chilly. The rooms, which extended round three sides of a court-yard, were all small, and consequently draughty. The sagacious owner cured it by simply roofing over the court-yard and building a wall to the fourth side. This gave him one large central room rising through two stories, easily warmed, easily kept warm, and serving as a store for the distribution of warmth to the rest of the house.

I should like to take a good-sized country barn, to build a kitchen and some bedrooms at one side of it, with a central chimney, to make a big fireplace in the barn, line and decorate it properly, and depend on curtains and screens for making one corner a library, another a dining-room, and the whole into a large, wholesome, warm and airy living room for the family.

Therefore, do not in planning cut up your space too

built for his own use by Mr. William Burges. The effect was very heavy and gloomy, but there were many pleasing details, and the deep fireplaces, with great carved chimney-pieces, had a good effect. For full particulars as to plans I must refer the reader to Mr. John J. Stevenson, whose second volume on "House Architecture" gives us a large number of typical plans suitable for ordinary but ornamental dwellings.

LONDON, April, 1890.

W. J. LOFTIE.

A TALK ABOUT PICTURE-FRAMES.

"FASHIONS change rapidly nowadays" said a well-known picture-frame maker to the writer. "It took nearly thirty years to get from the old style curvilinear frames to the modern straight and flat ones; but we have got back again in two seasons. The rage is now



LIVING ROOM IN AN ENGLISH COUNTRY HOUSE.

events, always looked warm. We must remember that black and likewise white are to be taken as either the negation of all color, or the combination of all color. They may be usefully employed to bring back harmony, because they will count for whatever is missing. As a theory, it is well known that all colors mixed should produce white; as a fact, it is also well known that all colors mixed do produce black.

With regard to planning, where any one can indulge his taste, a few words will not be amiss. In town such things are too often done for us, and not well done. It is more often in the country that we can work our will. But in either town or country it is well to remember that a large room is warmer in winter and cooler in summer, as a rule, than a small room, and that, if possible, every house should contain at least one great apartment which can be turned to any use. I remember an

much. The Gothic style, or some modification of it, is easier to design in than the Italian, and admits of greater irregularity in the shape of the rooms. I remember a house in the country belonging to an eminent novelist, who boasted that there was not a right angle in it. All the same, the most pleasing effects can be obtained in the Italian, and any one who understands the style thoroughly and can design so as to make irregularity picturesque will find subtle arrangements of arch ways and columns, so as to bring order into an irregular plan, not only a very pleasant problem to work out, but one which will provide him with very pleasing effects. Ashburnham House, now part of Westminster School, is an excellent example of how this may be done. Nothing can be more irregular than the plan of the stair case. But we are not all Inigo Joneses. Another example, in a different style, is a house in thirteenth-century Gothic

for white and gold, and frames with curved outlines in the rococo style, or open carvings in the Florentine style have been especially fashionable this winter."

"Do you remember such frames fashionable before?"

"Something like. A modification of the same sort of thing, which will doubtless come up again, and be called the Old American, or the Ancestral style. It was really the most debased Rococo. The frame had a wide, slightly swelling surface, with more or less ornamentation in low relief. The inner and the outer edge, and generally the corners also, had ornaments in higher relief, and both edges were much broken up with convex and concave curves. Can't say I admire it."

"How did the change proceed?"

"Very gradually the corner pieces were dropped, the outline was made straight and the frame became a series of mouldings, more or less ornamented, the whole pos-

sessing a decided bevel inward, until we reached this style of frame, still most in use for oil paintings."

"It has been objected that such frames cast a shadow on the picture?"

"That is one inconvenience connected with them. Another is that the frame, when seen from one side, as it were in section, cannot be made to look otherwise than heavy and clumsy; and it is often found in tastefully furnished rooms that the picture frames kill everything in the way of relief ornamentation that may be brought into them."

"You believe in frames sloping toward the wall, then?"

"For large and important pictures, especially as, when the frame is wide enough, a moderate bevel inward may be had next the picture. But, for ordinary prints and drawings, flat frames are good enough. For small prints, a half round moulding in plain oak, in white enamel or in white and gold answers well. A crude white should be avoided, though, and a delicate cream or ivory tint be preferred."

HOME NOVELTIES.

IN table china it is said that small flower decorations are to be used, and new importations of Dresden and Coalport china show many rich designs. Beautiful plates in Crown Derby ware are \$160 a dozen, and among the novelties is a covered cup in which may be placed a glass of jelly or a jar of condensed milk. High slender cups are now used for chocolate, broad low ones for afternoon tea and higher shapes than formerly for after-dinner coffee. Some Hawthorne blue plates are seventy cents each. The blue is of a deep, rich shade.

Something new in glass flower bowls and vases are those made in the form of a net-work over a plain or grooved inner bowl. They are in clear glass. About \$12 is asked for a tall vase.

A rich lamp with bowl and flaring shade of cut glass mounted in oxidized silver is \$42. This is intended for the centre of a dinner-table. The glass plateau which goes with it is \$3.50.

Silver is still largely used; fern dishes in oxidized silver may be bought for \$7. These have inner bowls of silver, which are perforated, and the growing ferns thrive very well in them if given plenty of water. Now that palms and other foliage plants are considered an important feature of the drawing-room, fancy bowls in great variety are made to hold them. The prices are much lower than formerly. A good-sized bowl in pale blue Leeds ware, ornamented with raised figures, and with griffins' heads for handles, is surprisingly cheap at \$3.50, while a "Satsuma" bowl, which would have cost twice as much a few years ago, is \$12. Small pots suitable for cut flowers, in blue and red Leeds, are only fifty cents. Wild flowers, especially daisies, look well in the blue ones.

Some corner writing desks in the sixteenth century finish are a decided novelty. They are richly ornamented with brass, and two small, round mirrors which face each other are placed on either side at the top. A three-sided drawer pulls out just below the desk, and a small closet underneath utilizes every inch of space. For a small library nothing could be better than this desk, as it takes up very little room, and serves at the same time to fill a corner, that most difficult part of a room to furnish. The desk, in one of the styles described, is \$25; in another, similar, \$20. A new hat tree has a long mirror, around whose oval top rows of pegs are placed. It is supported on a small simply carved chest which serves as a seat. The price is \$42.

Some odd and pretty hall stools in oak and mahogany have perpendicular rows of spindles closely set, and the top carved with a moon's face. They cost \$8.

There is a combination chair and table, which costs \$28. As a chair it has a round wooden back with a seat covered in tapestry. The table is formed by simply turning the back over to rest upon the arms. This piece of furniture is suitable either for the hall or the card-room.

Comfortable couches which show no woodwork are so inexpensive now that no one need be without one or more. They are for sale either simply covered with cretonne or left plain, and draped with a Bagdad or other large rug. An old-fashioned sofa which had been consigned to the garret was recently seen by the writer, and it had been so transformed that it looked like an extremely modern couch. The back had been unscrewed and discarded, and an upholsterer had added new springs and a covering of stout white cloth for which he charged \$3. Some handsome cretonne, fifty inches wide and a trifle over three yards long, had been converted into a spread by simply hemming the raw edges. This was laid over and pushed in at the place where the slope of the head joins the main body of the couch, no tacking whatever being necessary. Two large pillows of the same material placed against the wall make a really handsome piece of furniture out of one which was decidedly unsightly before.

Screens, other than those imported from Japan, have come to be regarded so indispensable for purposes of decoration that they are now made at prices to suit people of moderate means. A threefold screen five feet high, varnished to look like oak, costs only \$2.50. It is fitted with small wooden rods at top and bottom, upon which silk or thin cotton goods is to be shirred.

Small teak-wood tables have sunken slabs in their tops, which make them suitable for wash-stands. They cost \$8 and \$10. They are only large enough for the bowl and pitcher, the other appurtenances of the toilet being placed on a shelf above. Carved teak-wood cabinets from China, one twenty-seven inches wide by thirty-two inches in height, is \$25, while a large one seven feet high is \$125.

Some charming screens were recently seen in a room devoted to an infant's wardrobe. They had enamelled white frames, and were about the size of a small clothes-horse. Then arrow upper panels were filled with pictures, and the lower part was covered with shirred silk. One screen was in pale blue, another in pink, and a third in apple green. The special purpose is to screen bathtub or cradle, and at the same time afford diversion and amusement by the pictures and the gay colors of the silk. The upper panel of a similar screen had places for photographs made in the same way as the popular small photograph screens.

The Needle.

COUNTERPANE DESIGN.

THIS design (Supplement plate 839) may be worked out in an infinite number of ways and with almost any amount of elaboration either on a fine twilled linen with crevel or dyed flax (I suggest something which will wash) or on a silk-faced cloth with fillosette or embroidery silk, if something more elaborate or rich is desired. In the same manner the design may be worked out entirely in monochrome tints, using not less than four, or the diaper design may be worked in some good neutral tint, and the large flowers, of which there are eight in the repeat, in colors. Again, a good treatment would be to work the whole in pretty strong outline, filling in the small portions of the design in fancy stitches and the flowers with solid feather and satin stitches. For monochrome treatment, tones of good Nankin blue or of terra cotta, with a very dark morone for the deepest color, would perhaps be most satisfactory for wool or linen yarn, and good tones of old gold shading to brown for silk. The trailing stalks would be best worked in ordinary stem stitch, keeping them throughout of about the same thickness. Two or three rows might be sufficient; more would be necessary, of course, if the counterpane were to be a large one. A fine outline of the deepest color is to be used. This should also be carried round every portion of the design in split stitch, and wherever small dots occur French knots should be used. In those lying outside the leaf, small satin stitch dots of light tone, with an outline of the dark color, would give the best effect. The veinings in the leaves should be worked with the third deepest tone in rather thick stem stitch. The small markings in some of the leaves may be put in with herring-bone or "fly" stitches. In some cases, it will be observed, the leaves are to be worked solid and

possible, with a broad, flat treatment, not in relief except of a strong conventional kind, obtained by the use of the dark outlines and the bolder treatment of the large flowers. It could all be worked on the hand by a skilful embroiderer who understands how to mix solid and outline work without puckering the material. If worked in breadths they should be tacked together while the design is traced, and then ripped. The work should never be finished quite to the edge of the breadth, and when the whole is finished the seams should be carefully stitched together, the selvages snipped and well pressed and the embroidery then carefully looked over and finished over the seams. This will be found much more convenient in the case of a large piece of work, and, if carefully done, quite as satisfactory.

The work should not be ironed, but pinned out and damped on the wrong side and left till quite dry. The seams should be pressed over a paste roller if joined after the work is finished. Should it be impossible to avoid ironing, it must be done by laying the embroidery face downward over wadding with silver paper or thin muslin between. This will prevent the work being flattened.

L. HIGGIN.

CALENDAR FRAME.

THE Calendar frame (Supplement Plate, No. 840) is to be worked on a very dark red velvet—almost maroon—in fine silk embroidery and gold thread. This work must be framed, and, if necessary, it should be backed. The leaves are to be worked in shades of green, toning very much to golden hues. The pomegranates may be all in gold colors, with markings of deep red, but one a good many tones lighter than the ground. Red, with bronze greens and gold, may also be used for the stalks, and a little very fine gold introduced into the centres of the fruit will improve it much. It will scarcely be possible to mount this work at home. It should be sent to some one accustomed to mounting photograph and other frames, and made so that one can slip in the new card every month.

PORTIÈRE DESIGN.

THE original material of the portière illustrated on the opposite page is white silk. The leaves are heavily outlined in long and short stitch, medium and dark shades of brown silk being used. The flowers are worked lightly with pale pinkish brown. The border is in medium shades of brown and the design on the border also in shades of brown. The whole is to be afterward outlined with gold. A gray green Liberty satin might be used instead of the white silk, embroidering in the same way with the shades of brown; the flowers might be worked in shades of pink. Afterward outline the whole design with gold, as in the first scheme of color given.

"PUCKER."

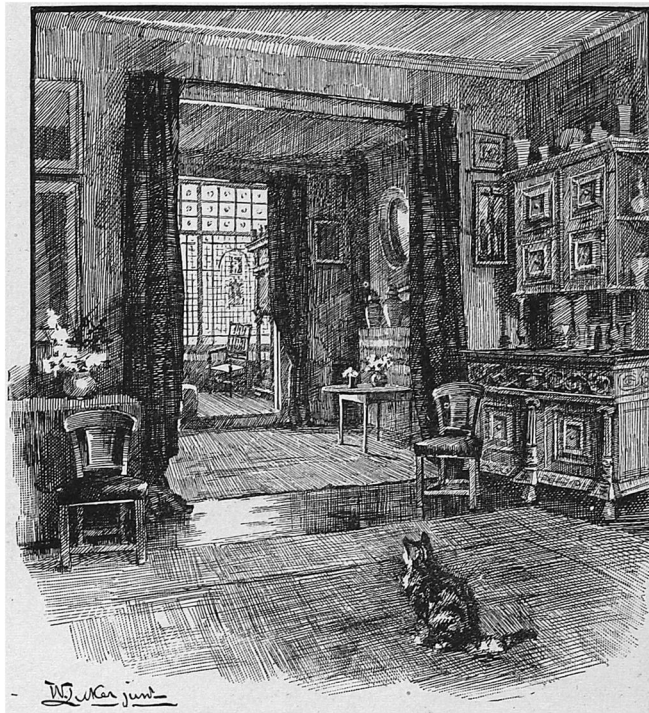
C. R., Tawes City, Mich., writes as follows:—Sir: In answer to your correspondents who have been asking for a way to remedy "pucker" in embroidery, I send the following, which has been practically tested, and will be found reliable: In embroidering, a single hoop, wound round with a narrow strip of cotton cloth, to which the work is to be firmly and evenly tacked, is to be preferred to the double hoop. For tacking the work on the hoop, embroidery silk should be used, and every stitch should be cut—not pulled out—when the work is finished. If you find your work drawn when it is done, the evil may, in some cases, be remedied by laying a damp cloth over it on the wrong side and pressing it with a hot iron. A better method, however, is the following, which is the French process: Take a piece of flannel—an old blanket will do—fold it across and lay it smoothly on the table, the floor, an ironing-board, the wall—anywhere that is most convenient—tacking it, in the latter case, otherwise this is not necessary. Then wring a cotton cloth out of hot water and lay it smoothly over the blanket. Let both blanket and cloth be without wrinkles, as these would leave their impression on the work and spoil its appearance. Lay your work, wrong side down, on the cotton cloth (sometimes it is advisable to place a thin, dry cloth between), tacking it down evenly at the top, taking care not to draw the work too tightly in the plain parts—as the upper part of a panel, for instance—but keeping the material perfectly even as it is when it leaves the loom. Then tack down in turn the remaining sides of the work very carefully, putting the tacks or pins used close enough together to prevent the material appearing stretched in parts. If badly drawn, the work will require careful and patient treatment. Especially is this the case if the material used be plush. In some cases of work that seems hopelessly drawn, I would suggest looking on the wrong side for the source of the trouble. Ends carried back and forth and caught up in the work, or ends not cut off and caught up in the carriage of the needle back and forth will often be found to be its cause. Another cause of this drawn appearance lies in the material itself. If this be of too light a quality, unless very carefully handled, it will yield to the pressure of the fingers underneath, making the cloth baggy and giving it the effect of being drawn in working, whereas it is inexperienced handling that is in fault.

NOTES AND HINTS.

A BAG for opera-glasses is made of a strip of white kid with a bag of gray silk above it. A bar of music is painted upon the kid, and the bag is drawn up with satin ribbons.

LITTLE tea-strainers made of finely woven grass are used in their natural color as baskets. Tiny silk bags, made quite full, are sewed into them and drawn up with very narrow ribbons of the same color as the silk. These little baskets will be found very useful to hold the thimble, needle-case and spool of silk used in embroidery.

J. S. S.—Bolton sheeting is very suitable for a serviceable bedspread. Fringe could be used for the trimming, but a good strong cream-colored lace is preferable of the same shade as the sheeting. A design of small sunflowers given in the Supplement of the February number of *The Art Amateur*, 1888, would make an excellent border. To fill in the space left in the centre, take separate sprays of the same design and powder them all over the material, taking care to arrange them in a careless and artistic fashion. The design can be merely outlined in stem stitch or worked in solid embroidery, if required to be very handsome. Flax thread would be suitable for either method; and when nicely worked it is difficult to distinguish it from rose silk, so glossy and rich is the effect. Make the flowers a rich yellow in two or three shades, the centres a reddish brown and the leaves a variety of greens in cool and warm colors. Flax thread is obtainable in all the most artistic tints.



VIEW IN A REMODELLED LONDON HOUSE.

(SEE "ART AT HOME," PAGE 124.)

in others long and short outline is to be used. Enrichments of French knots or little fancy stitches may be worked in afterward. These solid leaves may be done perhaps most easily with stem stitch; or they may be couched—i.e., the yarn worked from edge to edge of the leaf, and the veining worked in afterward in stem stitch. In one or two cases the leaves are intended to have an outline inside the dark edge, which has been worked in split stitch of the lightest tint and the thick veining of the second tint. The small, well-shaped flowers should be worked solid with two shades within the dark outline, and the bunch of sharp, pointed foliage behind the group in the same manner. In carrying out this design in needlework, the method adopted should be to work all the small details in solid or very much filled-in stitches, and the large flowers very boldly in thick outline, long and short, or what is technically known as half solid work. Should a treatment of mixed coloring be adopted the diaper groundwork should be treated with soft neutral greens or dead gold, and only the large half filled flowers worked in colors. Into these might be introduced blues, apricot tones, reds shading to deep morone and, of course, golds shading to brown. In the case of this treatment it would be well to leave out altogether the dark split stitch outline in the larger flowers. Before beginning the work, if this treatment is decided on, the skeins of crevel or silk should be selected and then laid out on the material, on which the design has already been traced, as much as possible in the groups in which it is proposed to work them, so as to get the whole scheme of color well defined before beginning the embroidery. As soon as the worker has decided on the treatment, threads of the different colors should be loosely run in in their places, so as to avoid any mistake being made. Of course the colors chosen for the large flowers will have to be repeated here and there in the diaper groundwork, probably in the French knots and small conventional trefoils, which would be effective if repeating the tints used in the rose or poppy. The design as described is intended to be worked on a butter-colored Roman satin or other silk-faced material in tones of gold-colored fillosette or embroidery silks shading to deep brown. A little fine Japanese gold might be used in outlining the centres of the conventional rose and honeysuckle designs or in outlining the ball centres of the zynia. The whole design must be kept as conventional as